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A Programme of Spiritual and Moral Instruction

(To Be Carried Out In Sri Nava Bharat Ashrams,
Attached To Educational Institutions.)

BY

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INTRODUCTION

The Indian students of schools and colleges are now confused and bewildered in regard to their spiritual and moral ideas on account of the contradictions of the sectarian, superstitious and customary religious practices of the house; the purely secular teachings of sciences, mathematics and social studies which are the only subjects of the school curricula to-day; the varied ideas imparted to them in the pages of the literary and vernacular text books of the different classes; the dogmatic ideas of sacred books (sometimes even opposed to reason) taught in their sectarian religious classes and sectarian magazines; and the preachings by lectures and books from solitary Ashrams here and there that spiritual life is opposed to one's own material welfare, as the latter is only false attachment to the illusory objects of an unreal world. The result is that the only ideal of the student generally is to pass the examination somehow, creditably if possible, and then, like a machine moved by environment and circumstances, to spend the rest of his time in sense-pleasures, sports and games, literary and social activities of the school and outside amusements. Hence it is strongly pleaded that systematic spiritual and moral instruction of a serious and noble

character should be imparted in every educational institution.

A. Present experiments unsuccessful

1. Some Denominational Schools have made arrangements to teach during or outside school hours the Holy Bible, the Holy Quoran or the Smrithis and *Ithihasas*. Pandits of the different religions teach these subjects. A few schools have allotted the last periods of Saturday mornings generally for the teaching of parallel quotations selected from the sacred books of the leading religions of the world, or for the purpose of explaining to students passages selected from the writings and speeches of Indian Renaissance leaders. Still fewer schools invite occasionally specialists to their Schools and request them to deliver lectures on spiritual and moral subjects for the benefit of students.

The religious instruction imparted in Denominational Schools is sectarian in character, and hence is not desirable. In the other two experiments, there is no systematic teaching of the subjects, as there is no curriculum for it, and only vague theoretical ideas are presented to the minds of students without any practical training. These experiments have

not succeeded in developing in the minds of students the conviction that spirituality (or the spiritual outlook and life) does not merely consist of religious formalities and religious worship for attaining selfish ends and removing superstitious fears, but that it aims also at the development of all-round perfection of the personality of the individual, that this perfection can only be attained by a moral life of self-control, unselfish work, knowledge of Reality and love of God, all carried out in a devoted spirit of self-surrender to God, and that temples, churches, dogmas and creeds are on the whole secondary, being only temporary aids for achieving the higher ideal.

The above experiments have succeeded also because religious and moral instruction is given within the class room or the school building, during school hours, in the midst of teaching of overcrowded subjects to all the boys of the school. The vast majority of students have no interest in this non-examination subject, and they do not allow the small percentage of students who are really interested and eager to receive the instruction to attend these classes.

B. The aim of Spiritual and Moral Instruction

1. The aim of the spiritual and moral instruction classes is to impart to students theoretical and practical instruction on modern spiritual and moral problems of a universal character on the basis of only those aspects of all the great religions of the world, which describe the universal metaphysical conclusions, philosophical arguments, ethical principles and spiritual practices taught in their sacred books and the universal messages of their saints, sages and *bhakthas*; hence it is designated as Spiritual and Moral Instruction.

But we do not propose to teach students in this class the sectarian dogmas, the forms of religious worship, the mythologies of superhuman heroes, the customary

religious formalities, miracles and superstitions of any religion or all the religions of the world. The average student may receive instruction in these aspects of his religion in his house, and the specialist student may study the text-book of comparative religion for this purpose. This class is not, therefore, a religious and ceremonial instruction class.

2. The treatment of spiritual and moral topics as well as practices should be as far as possible on rational, national and humanitarian lines by utilising in the presentation of ideas the conclusions of modern sciences, philosophies and social sciences; and at any rate on lines not contradictory to them.

3. The aim of moral and spiritual instruction is not to preach the comparative merits of the different religions of the world or even their equality in merit. But the real aim is to train the students to realise the *value of all the great religions of the world in their higher aspects* as noted above, so that they may, after finishing the course of instruction, be able to decide and follow their own metaphysical conclusions, philosophical attitudes, ethical principles and spiritual practices. Then they will surely and courageously solve the spiritual and moral problems they have to face in their daily life, promoting thereby individual and social happiness.

C. Method of Instruction in Schools

1. Spiritual and moral instruction, both in theory and practice, should be imparted to students outside their class room and school buildings in an *Ashram* attached to the school situated in a quiet place in the midst of beautiful natural scenery and environment, such as a mountain region, the sea-side, a river-bed, a grove with many trees, a forest area, an agricultural field or an open grassy plain. If necessary, the lands, which are now awarded for manual labour by students, may be used for this purpose. The schools which have not got

the above facilities may conduct the spiritual and moral instruction classes in an open space in a corner of the school compound where there is shade.

2. These classes should be held outside school hours, so that the minds of students may be fresh, when they receive the spiritual and moral instruction, theoretical as well as practical. Generally the classes have to be arranged during "Satvik" time in the early morning between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m. only once a week; but for the benefit of students who come from distant villages, they may be held between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m.

3. Text books for each class should be got prepared by experts in these subjects dealing with spiritual and moral topics as well as specific directions relating to spiritual practices, and they should be published as early as possible.

4. Prayers, *keerthans*, *bhajans* and patriotic songs have to be specially selected from the songs and messages of saints, sages and *bhakthas* of all the great religions of the world in Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, Sanskrit, Maharati, Hindi, Bengali, Urdu, English, etc., and published for carrying out the programme of spiritual practices. Students should be taught the meanings of these passages and songs, so that they may develop real spiritual and moral emotions in their heart when they all together recite them in the *Ashram*.

5. Teachers who possess the necessary moral and intellectual qualifications have to be selected from schools and given special training for a period not exceeding six months in an *Ashram* on *Gurukula* lines by qualified *sannyasins*, *pandits* and scholars, so that they may teach students in the Spiritual and Moral Instruction classes effectively.

6. Experiments in Spiritual and Moral Instruction of the *Ashrama* type may be started in some schools very early, and the number of such schools may be increased year after year, as it is now being done in the case of Basic Education Schools and

Multi-purpose High Schools. But all the schools in the State may be encouraged to start the Spiritual and Moral Instruction classes of the *Ashram* type as one of their important co-curricular activities, making their own arrangements for selection of topics and teachers, a grant being awarded by Government for this purpose to those schools where the Headmasters and some teachers are eager to start them.

• D. Programme in Ashram Classes.

1. It is enough, if the students assemble in the *Ashram* for this purpose only once a week for about two hours.

2. The students should wash their faces and should be induced to bathe before they attend this class, so that they may have this healthy *Satvik* practice once a week.

3. Students may assemble at 5-30 a.m. in the School compound and march in an orderly manner to the *Ashram*, so that they may be there by 6 a.m.

4. They may start the class with manual labour, *Yogasana* practices, *Surya-namas-kara* or even spiritual games for fifteen minutes.

5. They should practise individual silent meditations for ten minutes in separate places, i.e., under trees or seats previously arranged; they should be taught to meditate on their spiritual ideals or *Ishta Devathas*.

6. Next there may be the spiritual and moral instruction lesson—first period—for thirty minutes.

7. Next, there may be mass prayer, *bhajan* and *keertan* followed by mass meditation for a period of twentyfive minutes.

8. This should be followed by Spiritual and Moral Instruction—second period—for thirty minutes.

9. Lastly, all the students should sing together patriotic songs for ten minutes, meditating on Bharata Mata and Humanity as a whole as visible manifestations of God.

10. The whole programme should be conducted in a pious manner with perfect discipline accompanied by seriousness and *sānti* as much as possible.

E. Syllabuses for different Schools.

The following proposal is only offered for the consideration of an Expert Committee to be appointed for this purpose:—

1. Primary Schools :

- (i) IV year class: The lives and spiritual messages and moral preachings of great personages of the *Ramayana*, *Zoroastrianism* and *Jainism*.
- (ii) V year class: The lives, spiritual messages and moral preachings of great personages of the *Mahabharata* and *Christianity*.
- (iii) VI year class: The lives, spiritual messages and moral preachings of great personages of the other *Puranas* and *Islam*.
- (iv) VII year class: The lives and spiritual and moral messages of historical saints and sages of the ancient period.
- (v) VIII year class: The lives and spiritual and moral messages of great saints and sages of the modern period.

2. High Schools :

- (i) IV Form: Selections of topics from the *Zend Avesta*, some chapters of the *Bhagavad Githa* and some *Upanishads*.
- (ii) V Form: Selections of topics from the *Holy Bible*, some chapters of the *Githa* and some *Upanishads*.
- (iii) VI Form: Selections of topics from the *Holy Quoran*, some chapters of the *Githa* and some *Upanishads*.
- (iv) Pre-University Class: Selection of topics from *Buddistic Tripitikas*, some chapters of the *Githa* and some *Upanishads*.

The above topics should be illustrated as far as possible from the quotations of

the sacred books supported by the philosophical arguments of the Indian *Darsanas*.

3. Colleges :

- (i) First year B.A. Essentials of Western philosophies and the *Dwaitha* commentaries on the *Upanishads*, *Githa* and *Brahma Sutras*.
- (ii) Second year B.A. Essentials of *Bharateeya Darsanas* and the *Vishishtadwaitha* commentaries on the *Upanishads*, *Githa* and *Brahma-Sutras*.
- (iii) B.A. Third year class: Essentials of the philosophies of Indian Renaissance leaders beginning from Raja Ram Mohan Roy up to Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Radhakrishnan to-day, and the essentials of *Adwaitha* commentaries of the *Upanishads*, *Githa* and *Brahma-Sutras*.

F. The name of Sri Nava Bharat Ashram

Why are these spiritual and moral instruction classes called Sri Nava Bharat Ashrams?

- 1. It is an *Ashram* of students; because they receive spiritual instruction both in the theoretical and practical aspects.
- 2. It is a *Bharat Ashram*; because students belonging to both sexes of all castes, communities and creeds participate in it unitedly, and the essentials of all the philosophical and religious systems of India are taught in the classes.
- 3. It is a *Nava Bharat Ashram*; because the topics and practices are taught on rational, national and humanitarian lines in harmony with modern science, philosophy and sociology.
- 4. It is called Sri Nava Bharat Ashram; because its effect will be the promotion of individual and social welfare.

CONCLUSION

The 'Sri Nava Bharat Ashram' type of spiritual and moral instruction programme aims at imparting instruction of the

fundamental spiritual principles and practices contained in all the great religions of the world stated clearly in (1) the first mantra of the *Isavasya Upanishad*, ably and piously interpreted by Mahatma Gandhi, thus: "By the Lord (Isa) enveloped must all this be, whatever moving thing there is in the moving world. With this renounced, thou mayst enjoy. Covet not the wealth of any at all"; (2) the fiftyfifth stanza of the eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavadgitha* which Acharyas have stated to be the key-stanza of *Githa*, namely: "He who does my work, holds Me to be Supreme, is devoted to Me, is free from all (selfish) attachments and is devoid of hatred in relation to all beings he comes to Me, O Arjuna"; and (3) the first four *Sutras* of the *Vedantha Darsana*, namely, (i) "Then, therefore, the enquiry into the *Brahman*, (ii) (The *Brahman* is that) from whom (proceed) the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe, (iii) (That the *Brahman* is the cause of creation etc. of the universe, follows altogether from the scripture) because the scripture forms the source of the knowledge relating to Him, and (iv) That (i.e., the fact that the scripture forms altogether the source of knowledge relating to *Brahman*) results however from (this constituting) the true purpose of the scripture."

The State Governments of Swatantra Bharat Republic must encourage the

starting of spiritual and moral instruction of the type of "Sri Nava Bharat Ashram" described above in the educational institutions of all grades under their jurisdiction. The Indian Union Government must not only give liberal grants to State Governments for starting such Ashrams widely all over the State, and create a Central Department consisting of a body of experts in this field in order to encourage, control and ensure uniformity in the Spiritual and Moral Education Programme all over the country.

[Teachers, Headmasters, Educational Officers and Educationists are requested to send to Sri M. A. Narayana Iyengar to Gowribidanur, Mysore State, via Bangalore, or the Headmaster, Acharya High School at the above address, their valuable suggestions for improvement or criticisms of the above experiment of Spiritual and Moral Instruction of students in Schools and Colleges in order to enable him to gather together all the suggestions and views received by him and submit a final report on the subject to the Ministers of Education, Mysore, Madras and other States as far as possible for their favourable consideration and for steps to be taken in the matter—Editor.]

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BHOODAN AS THE MEDIUM OF MORAL EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS

BY

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To-day man has a clear tendency towards self-destruction. Man is pouncing upon man with a beastly and devouring ferocity, and the future of humanity is at stake. The culture and civilization of this country is inhaling the poisonous air of destruction. Foreign attacks do not matter so much for us to-day. It is the deluge of the countrywide moral downfall which has struck terror in us. In view of this great impending danger, Vinoba Bhave has come to the rescue with his great and unique project of 'Bhoodan', and through this medium he is trying to obtain the deliverance of India from the grip of moral degradation.

Acharya Vinobaji walked from village to village and toured in every nook and corner of the country to see in what miserable plight the soul of the motherland is engulfed. Throughout he came across the naked masses dying a miserable death of starvation. He, as well, found that, due to the bondage of long ages, India suffered from the death of the soul and spirit. The capitalists in the sequestered parlours of their palaces are voraciously sucking the blood of the swarming, rickety and starved and naked children of motherland living in miserable slums. Love and kindness, forgiveness, sympathy and compassion, sacrifice and service seem to have presently vanished. In view of all this, Vinoba Bhave cried out with pain. He could not bear the sight of such a wretched condition of the people of his own country. So, with a staff in hand, he set out for 'padyatra' (journey on foot)

Vinobaji made the people realise the importance and necessity of 'Bhoodan'. He declared: "If we do not soon bring about a change in the present state of society, we are surely doomed. To-day India has fallen into social degradation

and financial inequality. This Bhoodan movement is the means to get out of it safe and sound." Through 'Bhoodan', Vinobaji not only secured land to remove financial inequality, but seems to have saved India from a horrible bloody revolution. Thus this movement has brought the message of enlightenment and of humane qualities among people and has opened a road to morality.

Change of Heart

The Bhoodan movement of Vinobaji does not take recourse to compulsion through law. Rather it uses love and politeness as its instruments in touching the core of the human heart, with the result that people voluntarily come forward with generous donations of lands and other property. In his tour on foot, when Vinobaji reached the Deccan and saw the people in a pitiable condition, he found them desperate for a chance of violent revolution. Doubtless, they were at the threshold of communism. He therefore collected the people and enquired into their immediate hardships. The village folk asked him to give them work and land or food by a miracle. "How much land do you require?" asked Vinobaji. One from the crowd shouted that they needed 100 acres of land, and Vinobaji appealed to the landlords for charity. To his great surprise, a generous offer of 100 acres came from a certain person. This voluntary contribution of the man encouraged the spirit of Vinobaji, and it is from here that the sacred Bhoodan movement of his took real shape. Thus, the Bhoodan movement stresses on change of heart through the inspiration of love and kindness, rather than compulsion through law. Law is only like taking a horse to water, but is ineffective in making

it drink. It is the change of heart and sincere love that counts. It is permanent, and it is more important, so far as morality is concerned. Thus, the seed of morality is being profitably sown among people through this Bhoodan movement.

Inequality among People

Another problem of our villages is the inequality among people. The prevalent caste system of immemorial ages, in its acute form, and the modern caste of money magnates and the drudging labour class and many other similar distinctions between man and man are rampant throughout. The big landowner or the patel or the rich man of the village is supposed to be a superior being. He dominates over the poor working class. The poor villagers badly suffer from the fear-complex, and they silently tolerate all humiliation and oppression. The result of this has been that two distinct sections, the rich and the poor, are gaining ground in villages in the same way as the two classes of the capitalists and the labourers have done so in cities. It asks for land from rich people, and after distributing it equally among landless labourers, an endeavour is being made to teach dignity of labour. In due course of time, in this way, the difference between the rich and the poor and the master and servant will sink down. In this way, the financial and social inequality will lessen, and the spirit of cooperation, love and sympathy will gain ground. This movement in fact is a movement of general moral uplift.

Dignity of Labour

The third great drawback in India is that there is no sense of dignity of labour. Due to certain unhealthy influences, physical labour has lost its sacred aspect, and it is generally considered to be dishonourable. As such, the younger generation in search of service for a few chips of silver is badly suffering. Bhoodan roots out this inferiority complex and establishes the sense of dignity of labour. Land is given only to those who are prepared to break the

glebe themselves to produce corn. Thus, respect for physical labour will naturally improve the people financially and raise their moral standards.

Unity and Cooperation

The fourth great undertaking of Bhoodan is to bind people with ties of brotherhood and love. This will naturally give impetus to mutual cooperation. The land collected through Bhoodan from any particular village is distributed only among the needy landless persons of that village. Such awards of lands to individuals naturally develop the need of love and cooperation among themselves. Feelings of sympathy and compassion and mutual goodwill are extended to them. All these qualities build their character and improve their moral standard.

To-day, due to the unequal distribution of money and lack of employment, great dissatisfaction, restlessness and feelings of hatred have overtaken the people. This is leading towards chaos and anarchy. Bhoodan provides a solution to this. It asks on one side for the gift of land from landowners and creates a feeling of kindness and generosity in them, and on the other side it provides the means of living for the poor, landless persons. Thus, the feelings of prejudice and conflict between the two classes of the rich and the poor are gradually diminishing, and peace and happiness is approaching society. Thus, Bhoodan provides a great moral teaching of unity and cooperation to people.

Activity

Besides all this, we notice today the lack of activity on the part of people. They are day to day developing habits of idleness and inactivity, with moral collapse as a consequence. Against this, Bhoodan stresses the sanctity of activity on the part of the people, for the land-gift is extended only to those who can work over it. It inspires them the benefits of self-activity. Similarly it is observed that people in villages blindly follow tradition

as regards many extravagances (in regard to religious and social practices). Whenever it comes to that, they thoughtlessly sell away their lands and squander away money over things which in the changed times they find it difficult to carry out in festivals, marriages and so on. Bhoodan also provides a check over this tendency. As the land obtained from Bhoodan cannot be sold away, people will be safe from self-infliction of poverty and hunger. They will always have work and will try to maintain land nicely. This will help in removing a number of drawbacks from villagers and will bring about their moral uplift. The cause of the moral downfall of the people of our country to a great extent is due to their unemployment. "An empty mind is the devil's workshop". Bhoodan, by providing work and employment to the people, makes them catch time by the forelock. Moreover, agriculture is whole-

time business, and as such they cannot afford to waste time uselessly. Here also, all the potentialities of the man find proper utilization. Thus, all the evil effects of unemployment are removed by Bhoodan. People, instead of proving a burden to society and nation, learn to become self-supporting, which is a boon to the motherland. Thus, Bhoodan is a great instrument of moral teaching.

Indian culture has its foundation in religion and morality from times immemorial and is an eternal message to the whole world. With its deep sense of sacrifice and benevolence, it has always served mankind. To-day, to preserve this eternal Indian culture of ours, it is essential that we should not allow our moral standard to fall. Thus, it leads us to believe that Bhoodan is a guide and torch-bearer on the highway of progress.

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THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD SCHEME

By
WENDY HALL

When Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, was installed as Chancellor of Edinburgh University, he observed that his only claim to speak about education was that he was nearer to his own schooldays than were most educationists. It is probable that nearness to his own youth prompted him to launch, in 1956, the imaginative Award Scheme which bears his name.

The Prince believes that there is a wealth of excellence among young people which is left undiscovered, and so leads to a feeling of frustration and apathy after they leave school. He therefore proposed the Award Scheme, in his own words, "as an introduction to leisure-time activities and a challenge to personal achievements."

The Award Scheme was developed and organized by its secretary, Sir John Hunt, the leader of the victorious Everest expedition of 1953. Now that it has been operating for more than a year, it is possible to review it and to begin to assess its value as a social experiment.

Three Series of Tests

The scheme consists of three series of tests. The first series is open to boys of 14 and over; the second, to boys of 15 and over; and the third, to boys between 16 and 19. In each series there are four sections, each of which must be undertaken. They are (a) Rescue and Public Service Training; (b) a Planned Expedition; (c) Pursuits; and (d) Physical Fitness.

Entrants have to reach a certain standard in all four sections to obtain the Award, which takes the form of a Commendatory Letter from Sir John Hunt and a bronze badge in the first series; a certificate signed by Prince Philip and a silver badge in the second series; and a

certificate and a gold badge in the third series.

There is nothing competitive about the tests; they are, rather, a challenge to reach a certain standard in widely differing types of activity. Nor is the standard exceptionally high; it has been deliberately put within the reach of the average boy who has application and versatility. These two qualities are ranked more important than brilliance, because their development is part of the character-building process which the scheme aims at fostering.

How important application and versatility are can be judged from a more detailed survey of the work involved in each section. The first—Rescue and Public Service Training—is, naturally, intended to foster a boy's sense of service and responsibility to the community. Here entrants may take first aid, life-saving, accident prevention, home nursing, Fire Service training, Coastguard Service training, training in service to the blind, youth leadership courses, or training in the care of animals.

First aid has been frequently chosen, largely because the Red Cross and the St. John Ambulance Brigades are already running courses all over the United Kingdom, and have co-operated closely in the scheme. Their certificates are regarded as the standard to be reached in first aid.

Appeal of Adventure

The second section—Expedition—is by far the most popular. The appeal it makes to the youthful spirit of adventure clearly compensates for any difficulty or drudgery some may find in their public-service training. Expeditions may be

carried out on foot, by cycle, in canoes or small boats.

Actually, most are made on foot, and boys are required, in the first series, to make a 24-hour journey over 15 miles of normal country, spending the night in a tent, barn, shed, or in the open. In the second series, they have to cover 30 miles of normal country; and in the third series, a minimum of 50 miles of wild country. Before the test expeditions, boys at all levels have training in all aspects of campcraft, often during weekend courses.

The Pursuits section is the most individual of the four, and demands of a boy considerable application to his chosen hobby over a minimum of six months. In general, it is considered more important that a boy should stick at his hobby than that he should be outstandingly successful at it: though, of course, boys are encouraged to choose the hobbies in which they are likely to excel.

The scope is extremely wide. Bird-watching, archaeology, printing, marksmanship, drama, music, and meteorology are only a few of the pursuits which boys have elected to follow. Most boys gravitate to activities in which there are special courses in their schools or clubs; others may strike out on a line of their own, and then an attempt is made to find an adult specialized in that line to give the boys some guidance. In this way, many people other than regular youth workers have been drawn into the scheme, and contact with a gifted adult has proved most valuable to the boys.

The fourth section, Physical Fitness, speaks for itself. The Amateur Athletics

Association and the Amateur Swimming Association have co-operated in working out average standards to be reached in various events grouped under the headings, running or walking, jumping, throwing, swimming and physical efficiency. Boys are required to reach the necessary standard in three of these five groups.

Experimental Year.

The year 1956-57 was regarded by the organizers as experimental in every way. The number of boys entering and organizations participating were purposely limited, and the standards devised were considered as provisional. In October 1957, a conference of users of the scheme was held, and the first year's work discussed.

The majority of youth leaders and educationists were most enthusiastic about the scheme, and asked for it to be continued as hitherto, with only a few minor modifications. The experimental period will probably continue for another 12 to 18 months.

During the first year, more than 7,000 boys entered for Awards. They were drawn from schools, from industry, and from youth organizations.

Already, many requests for extension and expansion of the scheme have been received. Organizations in several Commonwealth countries have asked if they may participate, and it is expected that many of them will enter boys for the first time in 1958. There have also been many requests for a parallel scheme for girls, and this, it is hoped, will be introduced in 1959.

THE LIVING ORGANISM AND INTERPLANETARY FLIGHTS

BY

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After the launching of the artificial Earth satellites, it has become clear that interplanetary flight, to the moon in the first place, is technically possible. The question then arises as to whether the physiological properties of the living organism will allow this.

K. E. Tsiolkovsky was interested in this question. Flight in an interplanetary ship must be made at a very great speed that increases after the take-off from the Earth. This acceleration causes vital pathological phenomena in the living organism. For instance, when a pilot changes from the high speed dive to an ascent, he makes a curve and is subject to the action of torque acceleration.

Effects of Acceleration

The effects of acceleration on various animals have been repeatedly studied of late. We know that acceleration is more easily withstood in a prone position, when the blood flows to the abdomen and back. K. E. Tsiolkovsky recommended that the passengers of the future interplanetary ship should assume a lying position. Tsiolkovsky believed that to counteract acceleration the passengers should stay in water and breathe through a tube. To-day special suits are recommended instead.

Experiment has shown that in a prone position it is possible to withstand an acceleration of nearly 20 metres per second for 12 minutes. The flight with such acceleration would take a huge quantity of fuel, and the interplanetary ship, therefore, should be launched with still greater initial acceleration. Experimental data are already available on the possibility of animals staying in rocket missiles. In the U. S. S. R. rockets were launched to a height of 100-200 kilometers were made on dogs; there was mechanical regis-

tration of their breathing, blood-pressure, pulse; and electro-cardiographs were made. The dogs, dressed in special suits, were parachuted then. No vital disorders were discovered in their organisms.

This means that animals are fully able to withstand the acceleration of rockets rising to the altitudes mentioned. But in this case the acceleration was of short duration, and the longer it is, the greater the disorders, which may even cause death. Therefore, the creation of artificial satellites as future stations for interplanetary flights is important both for technical maintenance and as a place of rest for passengers. This is something that Tsiolkovsky wrote of in his time.

Hypothermia

At present it is impossible to foretell the physiological possibilities for making lengthy cosmic flights. Investigation of the effects of acceleration on various animals shows that invertebrates can withstand great acceleration for a long period; cold-blooded vertebrate animals can also withstand acceleration rather well. Among mammals, acceleration is better withstood by those in the state of hibernation. If it proves impossible for man to make lengthy interplanetary flights in the ordinary conditions, then the question arises whether it is possible to remedy this situation by creating a condition resembling hibernation. Until recently, this seemed a difficult thing to do, but in the past 10-12 years much has been accomplished in this direction. Artificial hibernation—hypothermia (a condition of the organism under low temperature)—is used in medicine, when heart operations are made which require temporary exclusion of the heart from blood circulation, and also in certain other pathological

conditions. At first glance, the idea of utilizing hypothermia for long interplanetary flights may seem too bold, since hypothermia has its hazards. But the methods employed to attain it are being perfected. Now it is possible to induce hypothermia in animals, from which they can come out at the proper time. I have experienced hypothermia myself, and although it was of short duration, I couldn't mention any unpleasant sensations when I came out of it.

Weightlessness

The next obstacle to interplanetary flights is the condition of weightlessness. When an interplanetary ship rises to an altitude of 1,000 k.m., the Earth's gravitational pull will be insignificant, and as a result, the slightest movement can cause a body to remain suspended in the air.

It has been suggested that weightlessness be counteracted by magnetizing the ship and by putting on iron shoes, or instead, by the wearing of shoes with special suction cups.

Until recently the significance of the Earth's gravity for animal life was not exactly known, and only suppositions were made. Some researchers spoke of the vital role of the Earth's gravity, mainly, for blood circulation, and claimed that its absence had a negative effect on the organism. But these fears were considerably dispelled after rockets containing animals were launched to a great height. The animals approached weightlessness, but it had not any vital effect on them either during the flights or afterwards.

Danger from Meteorites

In preparing for cosmic flights, many things must be taken into consideration. The cosmic ship may collide with a meteorite, and the sealing of the cabin may be damaged. For the sake of safety, the passengers would have to wear suits similar to the suits worn by divers and be well-protected against the entry of rarefied air.

During cosmic flights, the passengers will be exposed to cosmic rays, whose effects on the organism have been inade-

quately studied so far. True, after the high-altitude test-flights in rocket-containers, the animals showed no changes connected with cosmic rays, except for the appearance of a small amount of depigmented hair on the mice. However, a few grey hairs are not a very big fee for such a wonderful trip into the cosmos. True, we do not as yet know what difficulties are in store for us at high-altitudes.

Some light was shed on all these things by the launching of the second artificial satellite on last November 3 with a dog. The condition of the animal at a height of 1,700 k.m. was satisfactory. The physiological peculiarities of a dog with regard to its ability to withstand acceleration and other harmful effects are but slightly different from those characteristic of man. This prompts the belief that man too will be able to rise to such altitudes.

Space Way-Station

At the same time, the launching of the second artificial satellite indicates the path for further conquest of the universe. It is probable that, before organizing interplanetary flights, it will be rational to create a space way-station of several satellites, as Tsiolkovsky wrote. He spoke even of colonies of them located in interplanetary space, where the astronauts of artificial satellites would live comfortably receive oxygen and food from the Earth by means of rockets. Moreover, Tsiolkovksy planned the cultivation of plant life on these satellites to utilize waste and to supply the people with oxygen and food. After a good rest at such stations, a longer trip is possible, during which acceleration will not be harmful, since the Earth's gravity at this height will be insignificant.

The problem of cosmic flight is connected with a number of other problems, such as oxygen supply, food, water, diet, arrangement of a system of plumbing etc. These problems are more easy to solve. At present in the USSR and other countries, investigations are being conducted in this direction. Cosmic medicine is making its appearance.

THE TYPE OF EDUCATION BHARAT NEEDS

BY

R. M. THAKUR, Gurukula Kangri University.

Our leaders and educationists have often subjected the system of education in India to a severe condemnation. The present system, which was evolved and developed by a foreign bureaucratic regime for its own consolidation, is, they aver, outmoded and totally unsuited to meet the needs of free India. But there has so far been no clear perception of what should be done and how far and in what manner the system should be altered. Little do these critics realise that it is no use decrying a system, which, with all its defects, imperfections and weaknesses, has been responsible for the spread of knowledge and mass political awakening, unless we are able to devise a better system—a system that will satisfy the requirements of the India of to-day.

Bharat has a hoary and glorious past. It has traditions and a culture deep-rooted in pre-historic times. With the attainment of freedom, it is but natural that the typical Indian outlook on life should re-assert itself in an increasing measure. That it should aspire to guide, influence and mould all our national activities, expressed in and through institutions, social and political, is no matter for surprise. It is but the natural process. Our political subjection retarded our natural growth, and we were made to feel at every stage in our life the domination of a foreign people. To learn from others is not derogatory, but it is folly, pure, simple and undiluted, to imitate others blindly; it is intellectual bankruptcy. In fact, imitation is the sign of decadence, and it has never helped any nation.

Of all the institutions of a country, its educational system is the most fundamental and basic. Was there such a thing as the Indian educational system before the advent of the Muslim or the Christian power? Did ancient India

possess such a thing as an educational system worth the name? The answer to these questions is a positive "yes". She did possess an educational system, and it was the Gurukula System of Education.

A CHIEF FEATURE

One of the features of ancient Indian education lay in the students living under the roof of their preceptor. This accounts for the student being called *antevāsin*, meaning thereby that he is one who stays close to his teacher, i.e., under his roof. The *Chhāndogya Upanishad* describes the students as *āchārya-kula-vāsin*, i.e., one who dwells in the house of the *āchārya*. Thus, the usual system of education in ancient India was for the student to live in the house of his *guru* under the latter's personal supervision. A few centuries later, one comes across Brahmins having formed themselves into *parishads*. We also find organised public institutions for education, such as in Takshasila, Mithila, Kunj, Conjeevaram etc. But for a long time the obligation to impart education rested with individual teachers, in whose houses bodies of students assembled and resided. This *gurukula* tradition is reflected in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge to a certain extent, and the residential system in the University Colleges of our country is an imperfect imitation thereof.

The aim of this brief article is to discuss whether it had any advantage to its credit, and whether its revival, at least to the extent possible under the present altered environment and circumstances, will be desirable.

SPENCER AND MILL AGREE

The object of education has been postulated by various thinkers. Herbert Spencer expressed his views thus: "Education has for its chief object the formation



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A SENIOR COURSE OF ENGLISH

BY

W. TURNER, M.A.

SOMETIMES PRINCIPAL, NIZAM COLLEGE, HYDERABAD, DECCAN

Pages, 352.

Second Edition.

Price, Rs. 2·25.

PREFACE

With so many textbooks already available, we may explain some of the features of this volume which it is hoped will make an appeal of freshness to students and teachers of English.

Numerous works cover the full range of high school grammar and composition. Nevertheless, English speech and writing, as developing in India, is tending to a style of characteristic stiffness and often fails to maintain propriety of syntax. This is often due to the use of unsuitable, even slangy colloquialism, instead of correct idiom and proper expression. Efforts to limit vocabulary to a few hundred words only bring about a corresponding limitation of ideas, and make it difficult for a student with such restricted equipment to appraise a literary work in his higher studies. So it has been sought here to instil certain canons of Style and Form from the very beginning, and thereby to awaken elementary faculties of selection and self-criticism. This critical faculty has been decided, in the schools of Great Britain and Australia, to be indispensable for all classes of students in the approach to good composition. That is why, in every section of this work, emphasis is laid on correct expression and style, and the proper means of attaining them.

Many of the works at present available depend largely for illustrations and specimens on hackneyed, heavy passages from out-dated Victorian writers. There has been an effort here to draw only from writers who are good models of style and informative as regards subject matter.

The lessons are in line with present-day practice in the schools of the city of Edinburgh, of Scotland in general, and of the Middlesex Education Authority. Teachers from those areas have given helpful models and exercises direct from the classroom. The passages dealing with avoidance of error have been compiled as the result of twenty years of practical work in Indian schools and colleges. A new and deductive type of exercise has been freely introduced to stimulate thought.

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of character." To curb restive propensities, to awaken dormant sentiments, to strengthen the perception and cultivate the tastes, to develop a child into a man of well proportioned and harmonious nature —this is the aim of the parent. In the words of John Stuart Mill: "The object of Universities is not to teach the knowledge required to fit them for some special mode of gaining their livelihood, but to make capable and cultivated human beings, and the common end of all departments of Education is the strengthening, exalting, purifying and beautifying of our common nature and the fitting out of mankind with the necessary mental implement for the work they have to perform through life".

NOT MERELY MATERIALISTIC

One of the distinctive features of the ancient Aryan education was that it gave importance both to material and spiritual values. It stood for a well balanced view of life and laid emphasis on *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *moksha*. The fundamental Vedic conception of the soul was not an airy one, but was broad-based, attaching due significance to man's rights and privileges, freedom of thought, tolerance and humane laws of life. The goal of education in ancient Bharat was not utilitarian, but assuredly cultural. The *Smṛiti* writers deprecated the idea that the value of education should be judged by its pecuniary result. Vishnu says: "He who earns his livelihood with his *vidyā*, that *vidyā* does not serve him right." Kalidasa declares: "He who uses his learning merely for his livelihood is called a trader in knowledge." Manu's injunction is as follows: "Having taken the pupil, in order to lead him to the highest, the teacher shall first of all teach him the ways of cleanliness, purity of body and mind, good manners and morals." The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* gives one of the exhortations to be made by the *āchārya* to the pupil, thus: "Follow *dharma*." *Dharma* stands for law and custom, religion and charity, justice, righteousness, duty, discipline and culture. According to Ravindra Nath Tagore,

dharma is that principle which holds us firm together and leads us to our best welfare. In the words of a distinguished Professor, *dharma* means "the development of the inner spirit, adherence to the eternal virtues and disciplining of the body and soul in a way suitable to that end."

Dharma is so called because of its quality of giving support or being the basis. *Dharma* supports the people, and it is also the foundation of the moveable as well as immovable universe.

MEANING OF EDUCATION

Education, as I have come to understand it, is the expansion of the soul, and if it does not fulfil that purpose, it is a negation of knowledge. It implies an attempt on the part of the adult members of a human society to shape the development of the coming generation in accordance with its own ideals. Used in a wide sense, education means everything which helps to mould the human being; and with some poetic licence, we sometimes speak of the education of a people or even of the whole human race. According to Plato, education aims at developing in the body and the soul all the beauty and all the perfection of which they are capable. What then is the ideal of human life? Or what is the nature and form of the beauty and perfection for a human being, especially in our times? Though the essential aims of human life should perhaps be the same in every place or generation, the perfection of human life in the Athens of Plato would be different in certain aspects from what it would be in London, Paris, Moscow, New York or New Delhi to-day.

HOW A GURUKULA WORKED

The Gurukula system was in every way adapted to achieve the end of education as conceived in the manner above described. It was best fitted to contribute to formation of the ancient culture and the training of the rising generation in the performance of religious and social duties. The daily association between the teacher and the

taught was fraught with great and beneficial results. The teacher had the advantage of daily watching the intellectual progress and the moral behaviour of his pupil. The constant presence of the teacher contributed in a great measure to enable the pupil not only to do away with the causes of indiscipline, but also to cultivate that feeling of reverence for elders, so lacking at the present day. The *Taittiriya* exhortation to the pupil makes reference to this as well: "Whatever Brahmans are better than ourselves, in their sitting it will not do for thee to breathe." During the entire course of education of the pupil, a deep and solid foundation was laid for a well-ordered and disciplined life. The foibles to which youth are likely to fall a prey in town life, were avoided by residence with the teacher. The daily routine of a pupil, which was enjoined by his *āchārya* in the latter's abode, was marked by simplicity, endurance, ban on luxuries, a rigid adherence to rules of hygiene and *brahmacharya*, in pure surroundings, free from all unhealthy influences, and thus assured for him a healthy and robust manhood. The Hindu law-givers condemned the practice of stipulating that admission would be made only on payment of certain fees. When the period of education was over, an honorarium was paid to the teacher by those who could afford it. The close contact between the teacher and the taught, which was the feature of the Gurukula system, made the relationship between them cordial, even after the relationship of *śishya* and *guru* had to end.

STRIKING SIMILARITY

Sri Walter Moberly, in a recent book, *The Crisis in the University*, commented thus on the corporate life in the Oxford and Cambridge Universities: "The student, who comes in order to acquire learning or a professional qualification, found that he had entered into the life-membership of a society possessing a remarkable power to enlist his affection and loyalty. To it, he was attached by silken cords and singular tenacity. So then came into existence a new type of community, having many of

the qualities of a family; its members regarded themselves as sons of an Alma Mater. This has two consequences. First the teacher's is a pastoral job; to the student he has a personal and not merely a business relation. He has not only contracted to give a certain amount of instruction, but is to be the guide, philosopher and friend of his pupils... Their (students') University years have been to them a vivid and compelling experience, leaving an exceptionally deep impression, indeed going far to mould their minds; and it is in the light of that experience that later experiences are interpreted... They regard their University in Newman's words 'as a second home, not so tender, but more noble and majestic and authoritative.'"

The Gurukula ideal was in every way suited for instilling all the attributes of what is considered a liberal education. If, as is justly claimed by the Oxford and Cambridge Universities, they sought to turn out each graduate a scholar and a gentleman, that was what was achieved by the ancient Gurukula system. There can therefore be no doubt that the system is a valuable contribution to any educational scheme. As an old student of Cambridge and now in the Gurukula University at the fag-end of my official career, I find a striking similarity between these two Universities with the exception of a little change in the environment and atmosphere, i. e., pure Indian and British. What I found over there, I missed here, and what I missed there, I found over here.

EDUCATION AND RELIGION

The strongest point of the system of education in ancient India, particularly in Vedic times, was that it was religious or spiritual through and through. Education should not be sectarian. Doctrinal inoculation may be objectionable. But education is not worth the name, if it is not religious. We cannot do better than support this point of view with a quotation from the great philosopher and eminent educationist, A. N. Whitehead. He says: "The essence of education is that it is religious. Pray, what is religious education?"

A religious education is an education which inculcates duty and reverence. Duty arises from our potential control over the course of events. Where attainable knowledge could have changed the issue, ignorance has the guilt of vice. And the foundation of reverence is this perception, that the present holds within itself the complete sum of existence backwards and forwards, that whole amplitude of time which is eternity."

PRESENT SYSTEM

The present educational system in Bharat is defective in certain vital respects. In the formative period of the lives of young men, we can conceive of nothing better for the development of character, adoption of high moral standards and the expansion of the mind and intellect than the daily contact and association with a proper teacher. Our educational system does not afford any such opportunity. The teacher and the taught are thrown together at certain stated periods of the School or College, but this hardly enables the teacher to mould the minds of his pupils. Intellectual attainments are of no value, and often dangerous without character. As Carlyle put it: "Without hands, a man might eat and could still walk, but consider it—without morality, intellect were impossible for him."

Many of the students who undergo their studies in Colleges are living away from their parents. They are thus neither under parental authority, nor under proper control of their teachers or professors. The result is that the rising generation is falling an easy prey to all sorts of unhealthy influences. The School or College curriculum has not been devised so as to give adequate attention to the glorious Bharatiya culture, with the result that our young men are fast developing a feeling of scant respect, if not of scorn, towards the same. The education imparted being secular, there is no scope for our young men to imbibe a passion for religion in its comprehensive sense and for all that it stands for. These defects in our present

educational system can be to a great extent, remedied, if the Gurukula system is introduced for a few years at least in the educational scheme, care being taken in the selection of proper teachers. It is only then that it will be possible to restore the ancient Aryan culture to its former status and to carry to mankind its message of simple living and high thinking as exemplified by the *rishis* of old.

TEACHER AND SOCIETY

Education should aim at enabling the child to transfer what he has learnt in the classroom into real practical life; otherwise education would be useless.

A teacher should be an intelligent person and emotionally stable. To understand the psychology of the child, he requires good insight and high education. As a nation-builder, he should not only be respected by society but well paid.

The well-being of society demands that the teacher should be free from financial worries and restored to the status he once occupied in ancient India. On his part, he should also give his best and therein lies our salvation.

FREE EDUCATION

India of the Vedic times was a prosperous and happy country. Society had made education free from the lowest to the highest standard. Education by fees is of European growth. But all prosperous European countries are fast outgrowing this pernicious system. It undermines respect for the teacher, and he moves about carrying the last vestige of respectability under his armpit. In America, we are told that 90% of higher education is free. The annual report of Great Britain for 1953-54 tells us that about 70% of higher education in United Kingdom is free. We are in a poor country: We should strive after the ideal of free education in free India. We shall be reverting to our glorious traditions in this respect. It is a difficult task, but it is worth achieving.



There is no other book of its class that is quite so good,
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(Continued from Page 9, January—1958)

The xxxii All India Educational Conference

The following are among the resolutions adopted by the Conference.

At the outset the Conference adopted a condolence resolution touching the deaths of Mr. B.G. Kher, Mr. Shyamnandan Sahai, Mr. Baldev Singh, Mr. Parasuram Singh, Mr. Chandrasekhar Rajpal and Mr. S. N. Mate.

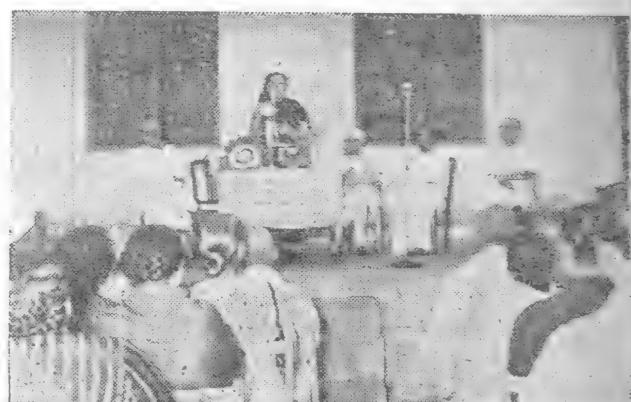
The Conference offered its felicitations to Prof. D. K. Karve on his attaining 100 years.

On the report of the Sectional Conference on Secondary Education presented by Mr. C. M. Fazalur Rahman, the Conference adopted a resolution recording its appreciation of the decision of the Government of India to assist the State Governments with 50 per cent grant towards improvement in the salaries of teachers of Secondary Schools. The Conference, however, noted with concern that no State Government had so far taken steps to adopt the scales and salaries recommended by the Federation.

The Conference learnt with regret that some State Governments were imposing such conditions and grant-in-aid rules as made it difficult for the managements of aided institutions to get the benefit of improved salaries to their teachers. It, therefore, requested the Governments concerned to take immediate steps to improve the salary scales of teachers, if necessary, by modifying their grant-in-aid rules and also by withdrawing all conditions that might otherwise exclude the teachers from the benefit of enhanced scales. The Conference requested the Executive Committee of the Federation to take effective steps for the implementation of the resolution and to contact the different State Governments for the purpose.

The Conference took note of the slow progress in implementing the recommendations of the Mudaliar Commission. It

regarded the existence of two classes of secondary schools, high schools and higher secondary schools, for any considerable length of time as undesirable and calculated to retard the progress in improving the quality of education. The Conference recommended to the Executive of the Federation to set up a committee with a sub-committee for each of the five zones to study the measures taken by the different States, such as upgrading of the high schools, and starting of multi-purpose schools, to evaluate the steps taken and recommend measures to be taken up for speeding up the reforms and bringing about some improvement in the standards of attainments of our secondary school pupils.



Srimati Tara Cherian, of Madras, opening the Educational Exhibition organised in connection with the All India Educational Conference at Madras, in December 1957

The report of the sectional conference on University Education was next presented by Mr. A. K. Sen. On this, report, the Conference adopted a resolution urging the Universities to grant adequate representation to the teachers on their managing bodies and further urged the Universities to set up tribunals for the benefit of teachers.

The Conference also requested the Central Government to increase its financial support to Universities and Colleges.

The Central and State Governments were further requested to give increased financial assistance to the meritorious and needy students.

After considering the report on education of aborigines, presented by Mr. Mahendra Prasad, the Conference resolved that a museum of ethnographic objects showing the different aspects of aboriginal culture and life be established at the Amarnath Building, Kanpur.

After hearing the report presented by Sri E. N. Subramanian on the Sectional Conference for Education, for Peace and Internationalism, the Conference adopted two resolutions.

The resolution on religious instruction in schools said: "As the highest purpose of education is to inculcate ideals and to foster a sense of right and wrong and of true values, and as this purpose cannot be achieved purely by secular learning, this Conference, in the interests of international understanding, concord and peace, urges the need to provide for religious and moral instruction in schools and colleges."

By another resolution, the Conference expressed the opinion, that the emphasis in modern education should be "to integrate the nationalistic outlook and the achievements of individual nations with a larger outlook, including a proper appreciation of the common heritage of mankind in the realm of culture and the great contribution made by heroes of peace towards promoting international concord and the welfare of mankind."

Miss L. Asirvatham presented the report of the sectional conference on Childhood and Home Education.

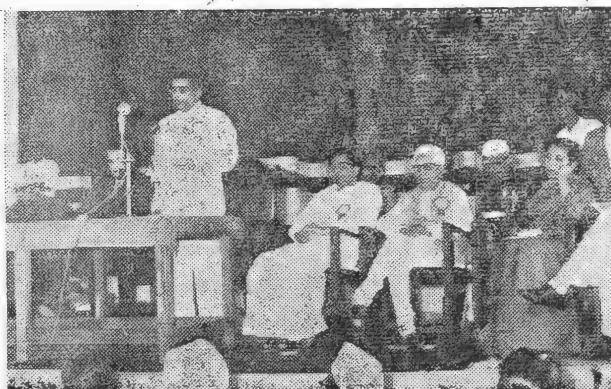
On this report, the Conference adopted a resolution recommending the formation of Nursery School Teachers' Associations in different parts of the country with the object of promoting higher standards of teaching in nursery schools.

The Conference also recommended to State Governments to fix minimum scales

of pay to nursery school teachers according to their qualifications and provide adequate grants to nursery schools. It also appealed for starting children's sections in State libraries.

The Conference thanked the dailies for publishing articles on child welfare and children's education and appealed to them to have regular childhood and home education sections in their Sunday and special editions.

Mr. Rangaramanujam presented the report of the sectional conference on Public and Residential Schools, and the following resolution was adopted on the report:



Acting Governor Sri P. V. Rajamannar inaugurating the xxxii All India Educational Conference at Madras in December 1957.

"In the opinion of this Conference, it would be conducive to the healthy development of education in the country that the Government should register, recognize and encourage the existence of a certain number of independent public schools outside the State educational system so that experimental work in education might be carried on without the restrictions ordinarily applicable to recognized schools within the State system of education."

The report of the sectional conference on Libraries was presented by Mr. K. M. Sivaraman. A resolution calling for extension of library service to rural areas and bettering the lot of librarians was adopted.

Another resolution pointed out that the existing provision for library service covered by the library cess was not adequate and requested the State and Central Governments to give grants for library service.

Miss B. Hemavathy presented the report of the sectional conference on Women's Education.

The report of the sectional conference on Oriental Studies (Persian and Arabic) was presented by Mr. S. M. Tonki.

On this report, the Conference adopted a resolution requesting the Government of India, the University Grants Commission and the State Governments to provide facilities and adequate finances to different educational institutions to enable them to introduce or improve the teaching languages and for the adoption of modern methods of teaching.

The report on Oriental Studies (Sanskrit) was presented by Mr. T. K. Venkateswaran. On this report, the Conference adopted a resolution appreciating the action of the Central Government in appointing a Sanskrit Commission for recommending ways and means of promoting the study of Sanskrit all over the country and hoped that the recommendations of the Commission would be implemented.

The Conference complained that the funds and endowments donated by original donors for spreading Sanskrit were utilised for other purposes in many parts of the country, and called upon the State Governments and the public to take steps to check such diversion of funds.

Rev. Fr. E. F. More presented the report on "Youth Welfare," and Mr. R. S. Gupta the report on Examinations.

Mr. T. N. Sundaram presented the report on Vocational and Technical Education, and resolutions urging the Central and State Governments (1) to provide effective liaison between technical institutions and organised industries to secure all facilities for students to get training and for teachers

to keep abreast of the latest techniques, (2) to see that adequate facilities were offered to persons employed in industries to improve their qualifications and technical competence by taking part in evening courses in technical institutions, and (3) to improve the pay scales of teachers in technical institutions, were adopted.

On observing Teachers' Charter Day, the following resolution was adopted : "This A. I. E. Conference notes with great satisfaction the decision of the World Teachers Conference held at Warsaw in September, 1957, with a programme similar to our own and that a burning torch, which is the symbol of the A. I. F. E. A. be worn that day by all the teachers of the world.

"In accordance with that resolution, the A.I.F.E A. decides to hold the Teachers' Charter Day on the day on which it is going to be held all over the world."

The Conference appreciated the decision of the Railway Board to grant concessions to individual students and requested the Board to extend the facility to teachers in all recognized educational institutions.

The Conference urged the Central and State Governments to provide greater facilities for spare time and part-time education for the removal of adult illiteracy and for the education of partly literate persons.

The Conference felt that in view of the similarity of condition in Asian and African countries with regard to education and in order to create closer understanding between the teachers of the two continents, a conference of the Asian and African teachers would be highly desirable.

Further, the Conference was of the opinion that India should be chosen as the venue of the conference and authorised the Executive of the Federation to request the Government of India to take steps for convening such a conference.

(To be continued)

EDITORIAL

The Sanskrit Commission

The Sanskrit Commission has submitted its report, but only a skeleton summary has been furnished to the public by the Union Government. It is not possible from this summary to comment on their recommendations. This can be attempted only when the whole report is before the public. The proposal to make the study of Sanskrit compulsory may prove acceptable all over India, except in Madras, where it would be desirable to continue voluntary study in order to avoid bringing Sanskrit into the devil's cauldron of language politics. The stress on continuity rather than intensity is to be welcomed in the light of attaining the objective of leavening general education with Sanskrit culture. Another important recommendation is the necessity to avoid competition between Sanskrit and Hindi. This is exactly what the revised Madras scheme provides for, and it may mean the death-knell to Sanskrit studies in schools and colleges in this State. The earlier Madras scheme of combining a less intensive course of instruction in the mother-tongue with the study of Sanskrit seems to have found favour with the Commission. And its continuation on a voluntary basis is the least that the Madras Government can do to ensure the continued study of Sanskrit in this State on modern lines. The deferred threat still hanging over the Sanskrit departments of aided High Schools should also be removed once for all. To other recommendations of the Commission, we shall refer, when more material is available.

Maulana Azad

In the death of Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad at the age of seventy on the 22nd February, India has lost a pious

scholar, a seasoned nationalist and a tried leader of the Indian National Congress. As Pandit Nehru pointed out, he combined in himself the qualities of the Scholar and the man of action, the virtues of the old and the new world. We beg however to differ from the suggested comparison with the French Encyclopaedists. Diderot, D'Alembert, Voltaire, Rousseau and other contributors to the French *Encyclopaedia* in the 18th century were brilliant thinkers and scholars. But their attitude to religion was always hostile and often profane and contemptuous. Maulana Azad was a devout Moslem, and his faith in religion was absolute.

As Union Minister of Education, it was his lot to guide reforms in the educational system after the advent of Independence. On his initiative, commission were appointed to investigate the conditions of Secondary and University education and the state of Sanskrit studies. The University Grants Commission was instituted, and a scheme of large scale help from the Centre to the States for education was started. Adult education also received his earnest attention. A general probe, however, into primary education still remains. And the policy of gentle persuasion which Maulana Azad adopted towards the State Ministries has produced a general ferment of new ideas through the various Seminars and Conference organised by the Union Ministry and their journals and publications. But the educational pattern throughout India is slowly ceasing to be uniform. The reforms by the States have been haphazard and uncoordinated. To bring these into order is a problem which would have gained much from his patience and wisdom. But it has now to be tackled by his successor.

CONGRESS RESOLUTION ON EDUCATION

BY

R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR, B.A.,L.T., Principal, Srinivasa Tutorial, Coimbatur.

Off and on, once in a few years, the Indian National Congress passes a lengthy resolution on education. At Gauhati, the Congress drew the attention of the nation to the fact that the future of India ultimately depends on the character and the national spirit of the young men and women and the training they receive in educational institutions, and that they should be weaned away from narrow and *séparatist* tendencies, like casteism, communalism, linguistic fanaticism and religious intolerance, and that efforts must be taken to develop a sense of basic loyalty to the unity and welfare of the nation, tolerance and high standards of conduct and behaviour. The resolution stresses the importance of the ethical approach and promotion of basic virtues among students. A true teacher of the nation must place before himself these ideals; but, unfortunately, the atmosphere of a good many educational institutions is vitiated by these undesirable tendencies, and where the right atmosphere may prevail, it may not have the potency to combat the forces of social evils at work outside the schools and colleges.

Secondly, the resolution on education emphasised the importance of the spread of basic education which is necessary to build up good citizens and for the general development of the country, and was passed unanimously. Pandit Nehru's comments deserve careful study. He pointed out that basic education is a State subject, and not the responsibility of the Central Government. Secondly, we should not force people to send their children to basic schools; and our effort should be to raise the standard of basic schools. Basic schools have not the proper equipment for teaching children in the basic way. The standard of basic education is not of a high order; and we have to lift up the schools from below. Thirdly,

the Prime Minister stated that there cannot be one uniform pattern of basic education, that its pattern should change from place to place, to suit local requirements and that children should be trained to become more and more "machineminded." Pandit Nehru's too elastic conception of basic education may not meet with the approval of the ordinary protagonists of basic education. His speech seems to lay stress on the impracticability of giving effect to the resolution on basic education.

The resolution demands the conversion of all existing elementary schools into basic schools, and high priority, direction and sustained vigour for this step. In my opinion, the conversion should not be enforced except where the head of the institution feels the urge for basic education and the local people take the responsibility for affording facilities and cooperate with teachers. The cooperative movement is not much of a success, because cooperative societies preceded the requisite educative propaganda on the right approach to the ideals and methods of the cooperative movement. Basic schools should not be thrust upon any one if the local people and teachers have not faith in the ideals and methods of basic education.

I am surprised that the idea of establishing universal education was not thought of and not referred to by even a single speaker at the Gauhati session of the Congress. Is the goal of the socialistic pattern of society envisaged at the Avadi session of the Congress attainable without universal elementary education? Is not elementary education for all, the first corollary of the socialistic pattern of society and adult suffrage in the constitution of Free India? The basic education experts who wield a powerful influence at Congress sessions do not realise that universal basic education is financially

impracticable and educationally unsound, savouring, as it will, of regimentation, and they should be satisfied with promoting a number of well-run basic schools in every taluk as models for private enterprise. In their anxiety to spread basic education, they are actually retarding the development of universal elementary education.

Pandit Nehru made an important statement on the writing of text-books which should be noted by the State Education

Ministers who are embarking upon their nationalisation. He said that children's books must be written by men of the highest calibre, scholars and experts who have made a special study of the subject, and suggested that an organised approach should be made to tackle this problem. Realistic and unbiased approach by the Congress Ministers of Education to educational problems is the desideratum for educational progress in quality as well as in quantity.

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I. M. R. Sampatkumaran, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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M. R. Sampatkumaran
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